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The Pawley House (38GE15)

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THE PAWLEY HOUSE (38GE15)
(Research Manuscript Series No. 16, Oct. 1971)

by Stanley South

PREFACE

The examination of The Pawley House, reported in the following pages, is an example of one kind of research that is properly the responsibility of the historic site archeologist. It is a combination of intelligent concern on the part of the property owner, basic use of historic documents, competent examination of the physical remains by the archeologist and consultation on architectural details with a qualified historic architect. Thus the property owner, the historian, the archeologist, and the architect have combined their efforts, directly and indirectly, to develop a basic understanding of one historic site.

This has been a "small project", designed as a "one day" examination of the site. The purpose was simply to determine whether or not the structure was really what it seemed to be and to decide if further work would be justified. This "small project", however, was really far more than a "one day" effort. Even omitting the considerable time that the property owner, Mr. Calhoun, spent in searching the documents, it was more than a one day effort. The archeologist and an assistant spent a day at the site examining the physical remains and photographing them. The photographs were developed and printed. The archeologist devoted four days to preparation of the report including checking the documents, comparing the information with that from other sites, and consulting with the historic architect. The typist spent a day on the report and Xerox copies of the report were made. In all, nine man-days were spent plus travel and supplies. All this, and really the only actual excavation that was done was to excavate one small hole beneath the east end of the house. By combining all of the above mentioned efforts, though, the purpose of the project was accomplished.

There are many kinds of historic sites projects that may be developed for a single type of historic site. These range from this sort of "one day" project to a several month's excavation project. Most such projects should begin with just this kind of "one day" examination. It is from this that a realistic plan of full development may systematically be planned. Not all historic sites merit further work. Only a few that are relatively unique for one reason or another, should have time, money, and effort devoted to them. Thus it is wise to begin, in this small way, with a determination of whether or not the site is worthy of further effort. Even this small initial examination is costly and this particular one amounted to nearly \$500.00. Had this proved to be "just another old house" all effort could stop at that point. If, as in this instance, further work seems justified that work can be systematically planned on the basis of the brief initial investigation.

Mr. Calhoun is to be commended on his very realistic approach to this site and on his enthusiastic support of the research. The Institute is

pleased to be associated with him in this project. We would especially like to thank Mr. Henry Boykin, II, of Camden, for his assistance in offering expert architectural comments on the photographic evidence of the architectural details of The Pawley House.

Robert L. Stephenson, Director
Institute of Archeology and Anthropology
University of South Carolina

INTRODUCTION

Location and Ownership

The Pawley House is located on the southern end of Pawley's Island in Georgetown County, South Carolina. It is the first house on the island at the end of the southern causway from the mainland, on U.S. Highway 17 east of Georgetown. The house has been assigned the number 38GE15 in the archeological site survey system of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina.

The house is protected from the force of hurricanes by a high sand embankment, or dune, covered with live oak trees, yaupon, myrtle and other growth. A catwalk at treetop level extends from the house across this embankment toward the beach. This protected location has resulted in preserving the house from the violence of storms for two centuries.

The property is presently owned by Amelia N. (Mrs. Alan T.) Calhoun and Carolie (Mrs. Henry G.) Bartol. Mrs. Calhoun's address at this time is Box 1713 Spartanburg, South Carolina. The property was acquired from Elias Marion Doar whose ownership dates from 1897. It is presently used as rental property for summer residents vacationing at the beach.

Present Appearance of The Pawley House

The house is not particularly impressive as viewed from U.S. Highway 17 (Fig. 1). It has a patched tin roof, a screened south porch, an open west porch, and a roof that has been raised along the north side (Fig. 1). The evidence for the raised roof can be seen in the weatherboard joints which reveal the line of the original roof (Fig. 1).

The Project

At the request of Mr. Alan Taliaferro Calhoun of Spartanburg, South Carolina, a one day visit to his beach house on Pawley's Island was made on September 23, 1971 by Stanley South, Archeologist for the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina. Accompanying Mr. South was Richard Carrillo, Assistant Archeologist with the Institute. The purpose of the visit was to examine the beach house and determine, if possible, its approximate age. Tradition indicates that the structure was The Pawley House built in the eighteenth century, a



FIGURE 1. The view of the west front of The Pawley House as seen from U.S. Highway 17. The beach is located behind the house to the east. Notice the weatherboard seams revealing the original roof line against the end of the house above the porch.

tradition so strong that Mr. Calhoun has never heard of a theory to the contrary. The one day project was undertaken as a joint sponsorship of Mr. Calhoun and the Institute through arrangement with the Director of the Institute, Dr. Robert L. Stephenson.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Mr. Calhoun furnished a summary of notes on the Pawley history which he has abstracted from various sources, primarily from The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina by George C. Rogers (University of South Carolina Press: 1970). The following is Mr. Calhoun's summary:

1694...May 9, 1694, George Pawley owned lots #103 and #104 in Charleston, South Carolina (South Carolina Historical Magazine, Vol. 9, p. 19).

1706...March 8, 1706, Percival Pawley, shipwright, son and heir of George Pawley, Joyner, dec'd., etc.

1711...Percival Pawley received 13 grants - 2500 acres on the Pee Dee, Sampit and Waccamaw Rivers. One of the Pawley grants extended from the Waccamaw River to the "sea marsh" establishing thereby the pattern for long, narrow plantations which stretched from river to ocean across Waccamaw neck. The Pawley lands were among the first to be improved. By December, 1717 Percival Pawley had surplus cattle with which to supply the Indian post at Winneau. A packer to inspect exports from Winyah was appointed in 1714.

1728...George Pawley, the most prominent of Major Percival Pawley's sons, was elected three times to the Assembly (1728, 1738, 1746) representing Prince George. Also commissioner of Winyaw pilotage. Commissioner of Lynches Causway, Commissioner of the new parish church of Prince George. Commissioner of the high roads on Waccamaw Neck.

1734-37...George Pawley, son of Major Percival Pawley, received grants of 1,155 acres in 1734, 176 in 1735, and 941 in 1737. The Waties and Pawley grants were mainly on the Waccamaw River.

1735...On January 15, 16, 1735 Elisha and Hannah Screven conveyed the town (Georgetown) to three trustees: George Pawley, William Swinton, and Daniel LaRoche.

1735 and 1737...Major George Pawley, Port Commissioner.

1736...George Pawley contributed to Prince George Winyah.

1737...List of Georgetown lot owners: George Pawley and Pierce (Percival) Pawley.

1737-38...George Pawley gave land and superintended the building of a chapel of ease on Waccamaw Neck. (Rev. John Fordyce preached on Lent 1737/1738).

Sons of Major Percival Pawley died:

1741...Anthony Pawley

1749...Percival Pawley

1774...George Pawley

1745...In August, 1745 after a schooner carrying Percival Pawley and Colonel George Pawley's son was captured (by Spanish privateers), the militia was called out.

1746..."This quality of vigilance was recognized when Governor Glen sent Pawley (George) to the Cherokees in 1746." Later Governor Lyttelton made use of his services by appointing him adjutant-general of the provincial militia.

1762...S.C. Gazette. Shackelford and Lupton in 1761 advertised 25 slaves for sale in Georgetown and George Pawley, Jr., 40 slaves in 1762.

1775...Henry Mouzon Map - "Pawley, Pawley's Chapel", etc.

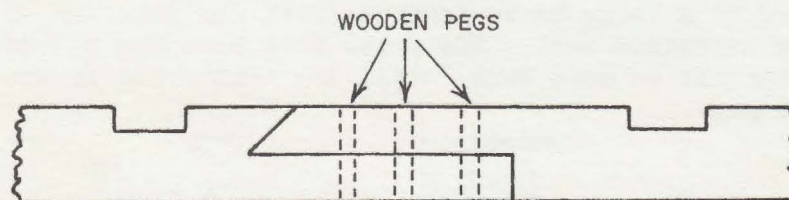
Since this project was only one day in length this summary of Mr. Calhoun's was very helpful in providing a background perspective for the examination of the house. Specific historical research can be undertaken when a broader scope study is carried out on this house. This capsule offers a clue to the documents available when such research is undertaken.

THE STRUCTURE

Beneath The House

The house sits on brick footing columns 18" by 36". The bricks are wine colored to red, and include darker purple inclusions representing organic matter in the clay at the time of firing. Similar characteristics were seen in eighteenth century bricks from the collection in the Charleston Museum that came from various plantations. The mortar has burned oyster shell inclusions in a sandy lime matrix. Some fibrous material is also present. The chimney beneath the house has a much higher percentage of lime than was noted in the footings. The mortar is much whiter, with the footing mortar being more yellow in color due to the higher percentage of yellow quartz sand. The chimney has Roman arches on the east and west sides for support of the weight above.

Beneath the floor of the house some shims are missing from the spaces where shims should be for leveling, while some are broken off. The large beams supporting the house are spliced with a locking notch and secured with three wooden pegs as drawn here.



PROFILE OF BEAM SPLICE BENEATH HOUSE

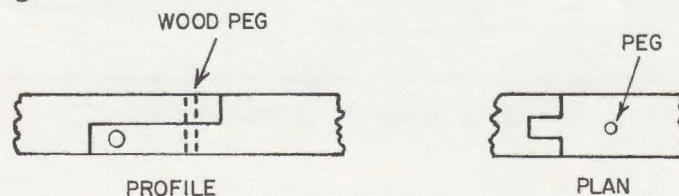
A small hole was dug beneath the east end of the house to see if evidence of foundations of the east porch were evident, and to determine something of the profile beneath the house. A wooden trough, possibly a drain, was found nine inches below the surface. By using the probe it was determined that at least two feet of the washed-in sand is now deposited above the original level beneath the house. Water began running into the one foot deep hole we dug, indicating that the water level now is much higher than it is likely to have been when the house was constructed. This probably results from drain lines to the marsh being installed beneath the highway in the area, which allows the marsh to feed water beneath the house at times of high water. Any excavation to the original ground level around the house would probably result in very wet excavation conditions because of this.

The West Porch

The small enclosed room on the north end of the west porch appears to have been built at the same time as the house or shortly thereafter due to the presence of wrought nails in the weatherboarding. Wrought nails were used in all the original weatherboarding, indicating a date for the house prior to around 1800. There have been repairs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to this porch room. The door to this room has been moved here from elsewhere, and the door frame appears to also have been added later than the original construction of the house.

The original porch columns are missing, but the sockets where they engaged the overhead beam for the porch are still evident. The shutters for the window on the west porch wall have a lift type iron shutter latch and strap hinges, with plate type pintles mounted onto the window frame (Fig. 2). The shutter is made of two battened boards, with both the boards and the battens being beaded with the groove typical of eighteenth century construction (Figs. 2 and 3). The window frame is also constructed with beaded timbers. Iron screws and wrought nails were used to fasten the original hardware. An iron shutter locking bar was used for fastening the shutter in a closed position. These pieces of shutter hardware are like those recovered from the ruins of Russellborough in Brunswick Town, North Carolina, the colonial mansion home of Governors Arthur Dobbs and William Tryon (South 1967: 360). Russellborough was begun in 1752, but was not completed until 1758, and was burned in 1776 (South 1967: 360-365).

The overhead timbers on the porch are original, but the roof has been replaced. The timbers at the junction of the west and south porch are anchored by a large heavy iron angle at the junction of the roof beam to the partition wall. The porch roof beam has a U-splice at various intervals as seen here, utilizing tongue and groove and lap splice with pegs.



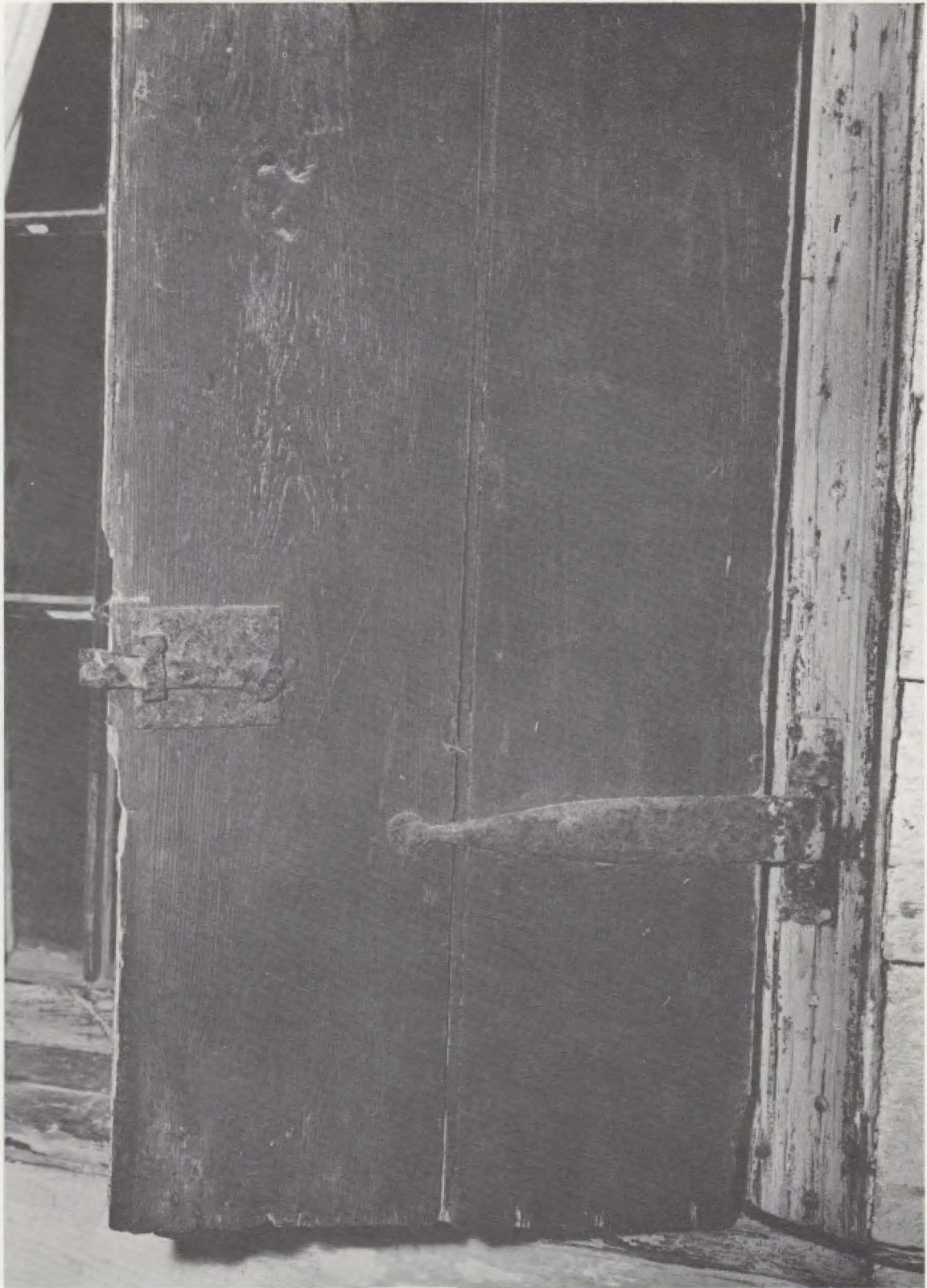


FIGURE 2. The exterior of the shutters showing the eighteenth century lift latch and wrought iron strap hinge with plate type pintel mounted with wrought nails. Notice the beaded shutter boards and beaded window frame.



FIGURE 3. The interior of the shutter showing detail of beaded batten board and strap hinge on plate type pintle.

The South Porch

Inside the screened south porch, high overhead on the face of the house and just under the porch roof, are four small double windows that are apparently for ventilation of the second floor rooms. Along the south wall of the house inside this screened porch are four windows, two for each room. The shutters have the iron hardware mentioned previously (Figs. 2-3), as well as wooden shutter bolt carriers that were added after the original iron bolts were no longer functional. The windows appear to be original, with beaded casings, with unweighted sashes with nine over nine panes. There is no evidence of shutter dogs, but holes in the shutters indicate that hooks were once used to fasten the shutters in an open position, just as modern hooks now do. There is evidence of the staple that was once driven into the wall on which the shutter hook was fastened. On the porch floor, where new wire nails have been used to fasten floorboards, it was noticed that the cold nails act as an attraction for salt-spray moisture, resulting in salt-bleached spots of lighter wood around each nail. This process has resulted in the wrought nails with which the house was constructed deteriorating, along with the other hardware, until the iron is in very poor condition, poorer than many examples of similar hardware that have been buried in the ground for two hundred years. To see such hardware on a beach house having survived the elements for two hundred years is indeed a rare sight.

The Interior Of The West Room

The transom above the door to the west porch in this room has been removed by weatherboarding over it. The door is artificially grained with matching panels in imitation of mahogany, with an imitation bevel and line of pseudo-inlaid veneer around the panel. The door has six panels, with two small ones at the top. The door has been moved to its present position from elsewhere. Large HL hinges are on the doors in this room, but they also appear to be replacements. The northwest door in this room has no original door caseing, and cut nails were used in its construction, indicating a date probably after 1800 for its construction. The character of the doors, with their mahogany graining effect, is out of character with the whitewashed walls and were apparently moved from another structure, perhaps one with paneling matching that seen on the doors (Fig. 4).

The interior of the room was covered with many coats of whitewash, which has been partially removed by Mr. Calhoun. There is no evidence that the room was ever plastered, and it therefore becomes apparent that it has always had exposed beams and weatherboards as now seen (Fig. 5). The weatherboarding and main timbers are all straight-sawed as can be seen in Figure 5.

The fireplace is located against the east wall of the room, with a door to the east room located to the south of the fireplace, and an enclosed stairwell to the second floor located to the north of the fireplace. Beneath this stairwell, against the single-board-thick partition wall, an enclosed cabinet has been built in recent years. Above this



FIGURE 4. The northeast door to the west room revealing the detailed graining effect seen on many doors in the house. Note the imitation inlaid effect created by incising a line into the wet graining pattern on the panels.

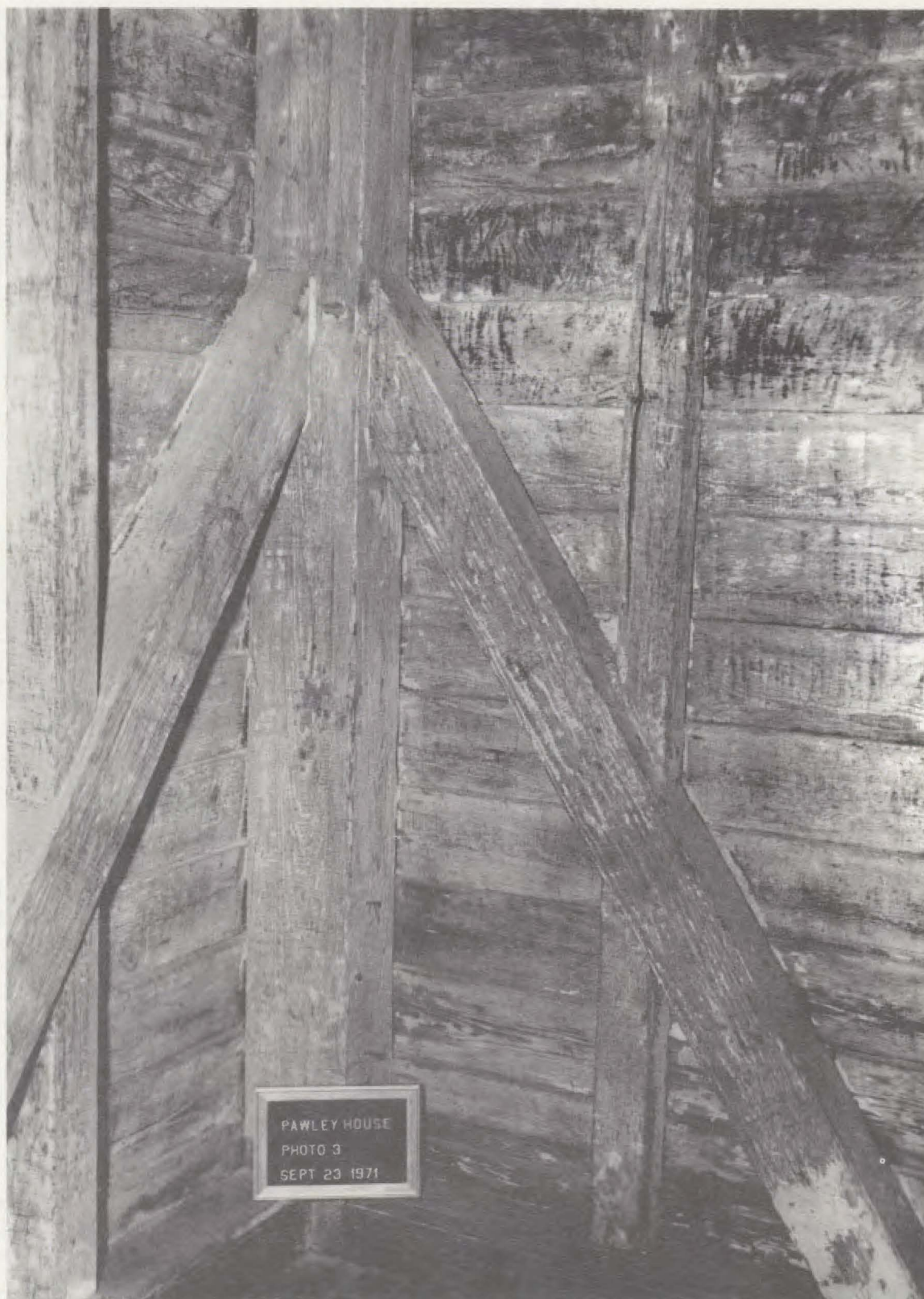


FIGURE 5. The southwest corner of the west room of The Pawley House showing the exposed timber and weatherboard effect seen throughout the first floor. The whitewash was removed due to its tendency to flake off and create a constant maintenance problem. Notice the parallel saw marks on the timbers and weatherboards.

are three rows of pegs driven through holes in the wall so that there was a peg on both sides of the partition wall for the purpose of hanging clothes. This, and the fact that this clothes hanging area was never enclosed, point to a summer house usage for the house as opposed to a dwelling house, which would have had enclosed closets (Fig. 6). The whitewashed finish also points to this interpretation.

The mantel for the fireplace in this room appears to have been added, being originally constructed for an opening of different shape than the fireplace it now accompanies (Fig. 7). Henry D. Boykin, II, an architect from Camden who has made early house examination a special interest, says of this mantel:

I quite agree with you that there is something amiss when both mantels are examined. The more ornate mantle in Figure 7 is strictly a carpenter's brain child, and perhaps is from another house, because it doesn't fit the fireplace opening. The wood of the mantel lines up with the brick work at the top of the fireplace opening which is neither safe nor traditional (Boykin November 11, 1971).

The Interior Of The East Room

The mantel in the east room fits the fireplace opening and may well be an original (Fig. 8). Henry Boykin says of this mantel that it:

... is also a carpenter's delight, but based on classical precedent, and this mantel seems to fit the fireplace opening. If either of them were made for the house, I believe it would be this one (Boykin November 11, 1971).

The chimney has been repointed in recent years due to decay of the mortar joints. The chimney has wood blocking in the brick work as though the intent was to cover the chimney with lathing, but there is no indication that this was ever done.

The partition wall between the east and west rooms is not beaded as are the doors and shutters. It is interesting to note that the door facings in both rooms are painted blue, which was done to keep out the local evil spirit OLD PLAT EYE, according to Mr. Calhoun. From the age of the house, and its function as a place of pleasurable relaxation, apparently the precaution has worked well.

The doors have had nineteenth century caselocks added to replace the original ones. These replacements have iron doorknobs. Earlier locks utilized latch strings and keyholes with brass keyhole escutcheons. The south door leading to the porch has six panels, with a rabbeted decorative groove cut around the face of each panel. This door shows much weather wear and may have come from another entrance where wear was more excessive. This doorway once had an added interior frame for an inside door.



FIGURE 6. The northeast corner of the west room showing enclosed stairwell to the second floor. The transom was closed when the original porch was converted into living quarters. Notice the row of pegs, which is the top row of three for use in hanging clothes in lieu of closets. The boxed cabinet is a recent addition which enclosed a row of pegs apparently for use of children.

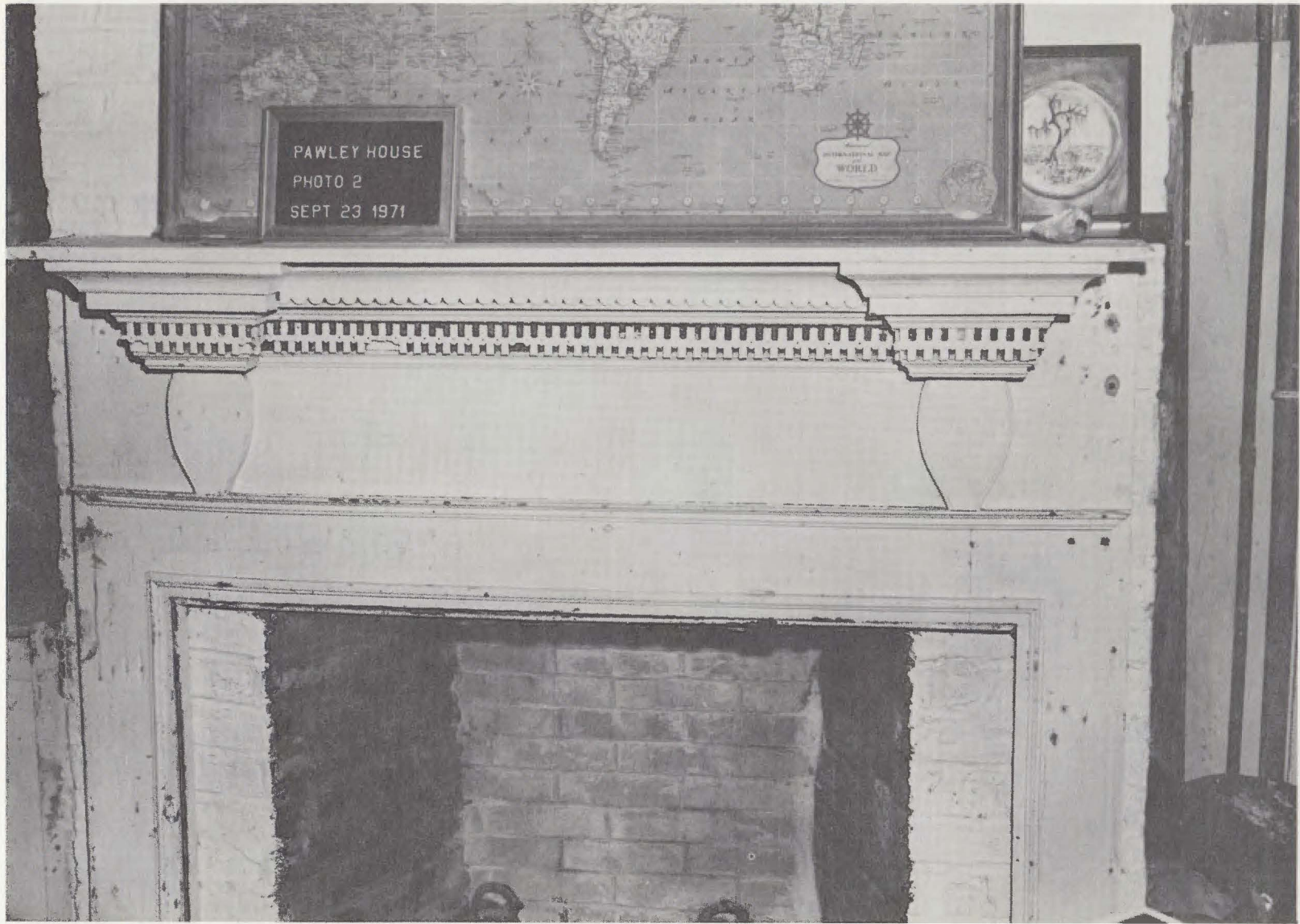


FIGURE 7. The fireplace and mantel on the east wall of the west room. The lack of fit of mantel to fireplace opening reveals that the mantel was built for another fireplace and then moved to this building at a time after the house was constructed. This mantel appears to be later than the one on the opposite fireplace in the east room. This mantel was probably built by a local carpenter.

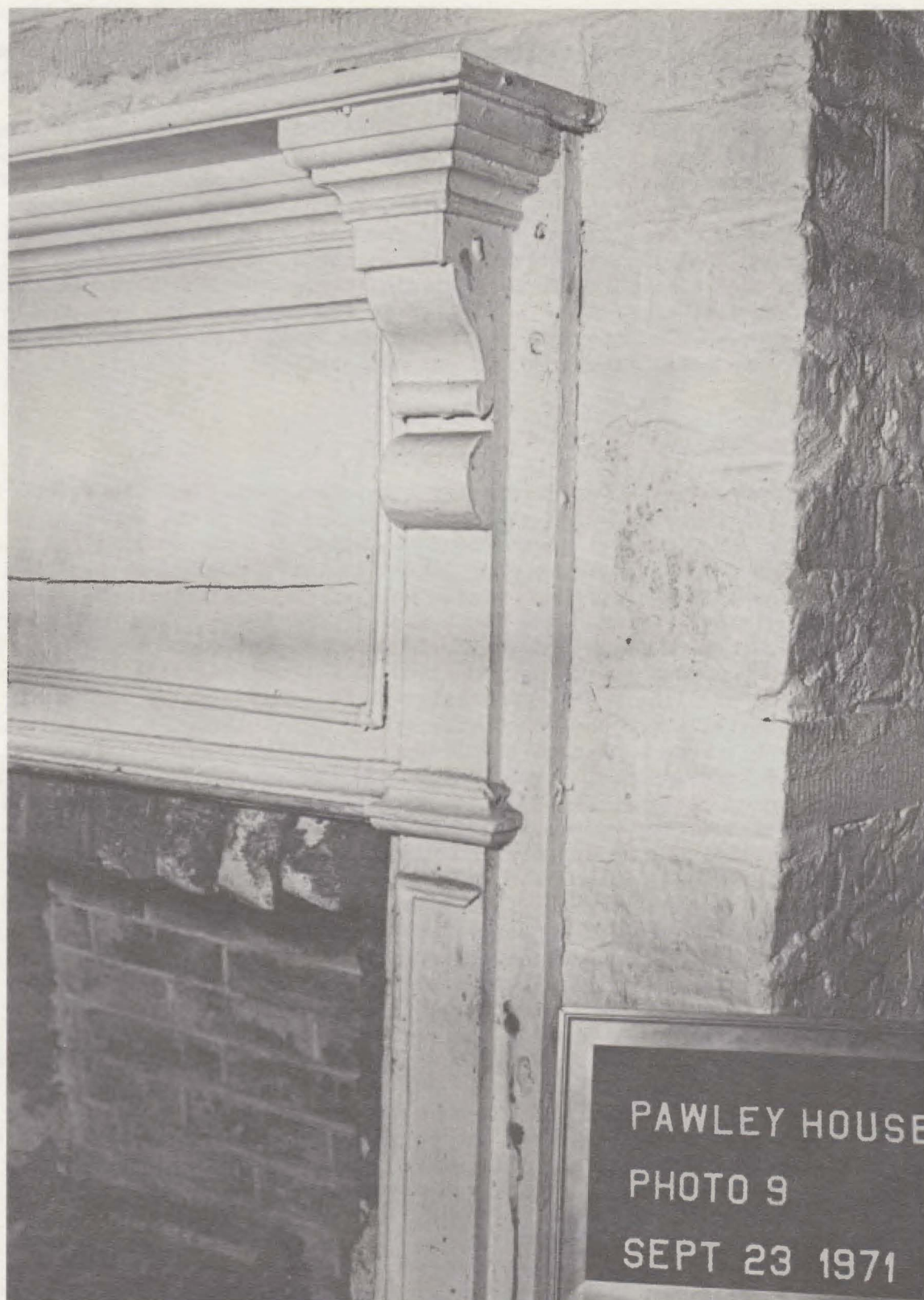


FIGURE 8. Detail view of the mantel in the east room of The Pawley House. The fit of this mantel to the fireplace opening tends to point to this being an original mantel. The inclusion of timbers in the brickwork would indicate that plans for plastering the chimney were made, but the evidence does not indicate that this was ever done.

The doors on the north side of both rooms have had their transoms sealed at the time the north porch was changed into rooms. The stairwell can be seen in this room as well as in the west room since it is placed directly over the partition between the two rooms. The ceilings in these rooms are from 12 1/2 to 13 feet high, with exposed overhead beams and floorboards. Over the south door to the porch in this east room is a repaired section of flooring for the second floor. Below this repaired floor, on the floor of the east room between the south door and the hearth, are burned scars in the floor indicating that a fire overhead apparently dropped burning coals onto the floor in this room. The fire apparently originated in the second floor room and burned through the floor and fell into the first floor, at which time it must have been discovered and extinguished.

The North Porch

The north porch was originally a covered porch, but was raised in the nineteenth century and the area converted into a two story group of rooms. The original porch floor was used, and the stairway to the second floor was changed so that access to the second floor was by means of stairs against the outside wall of the porch instead of directly up the stairs through the north wall of the house. The back porch was apparently enclosed originally in part of its length at least. The porch roof support posts were utilized in the construction of the second floor, and are likely the type that were originally to be seen along the porches on the south and west sides of the house (Fig. 9). These columns are 9 by 9 inches with chamfered corners, making an octagon in the chamfered area in the central area of the column. The chamfered corners form an ogee curve at the junction with the unchamfered corner. The newel post for the present stairs is also chamfered, but is not done with the skill of the workman who fashioned the original porch support posts. This newel post was apparently added at the time the stairs were moved when the second floor rooms were added above the north porch. Beneath the present steps there appears to be evidence for the attachment of the original newel posts for the stairs. There is evidence opposite the foot of the original stairs that a doorway was located here, opposite the stairs, which would have been an exterior door off the enclosed porch. This opening has been closed with circular saw cut boards and cut nails, indicating that the opening was sealed at the time that the new stairs were constructed. The original steps footed only three feet or so from the edge of the porch, with the door just opposite. The stairs were not enclosed, but the porch was. When the second floor was added above the porch, the stairs were moved.

The Second Floor - Stairwell

The area of the stairwell still remaining in the second floor of the house is original, and although it might be speculated that the stairs were raised at the time the roof was raised, there appears to be no evidence to support this. The stairwell is enclosed with vertical,

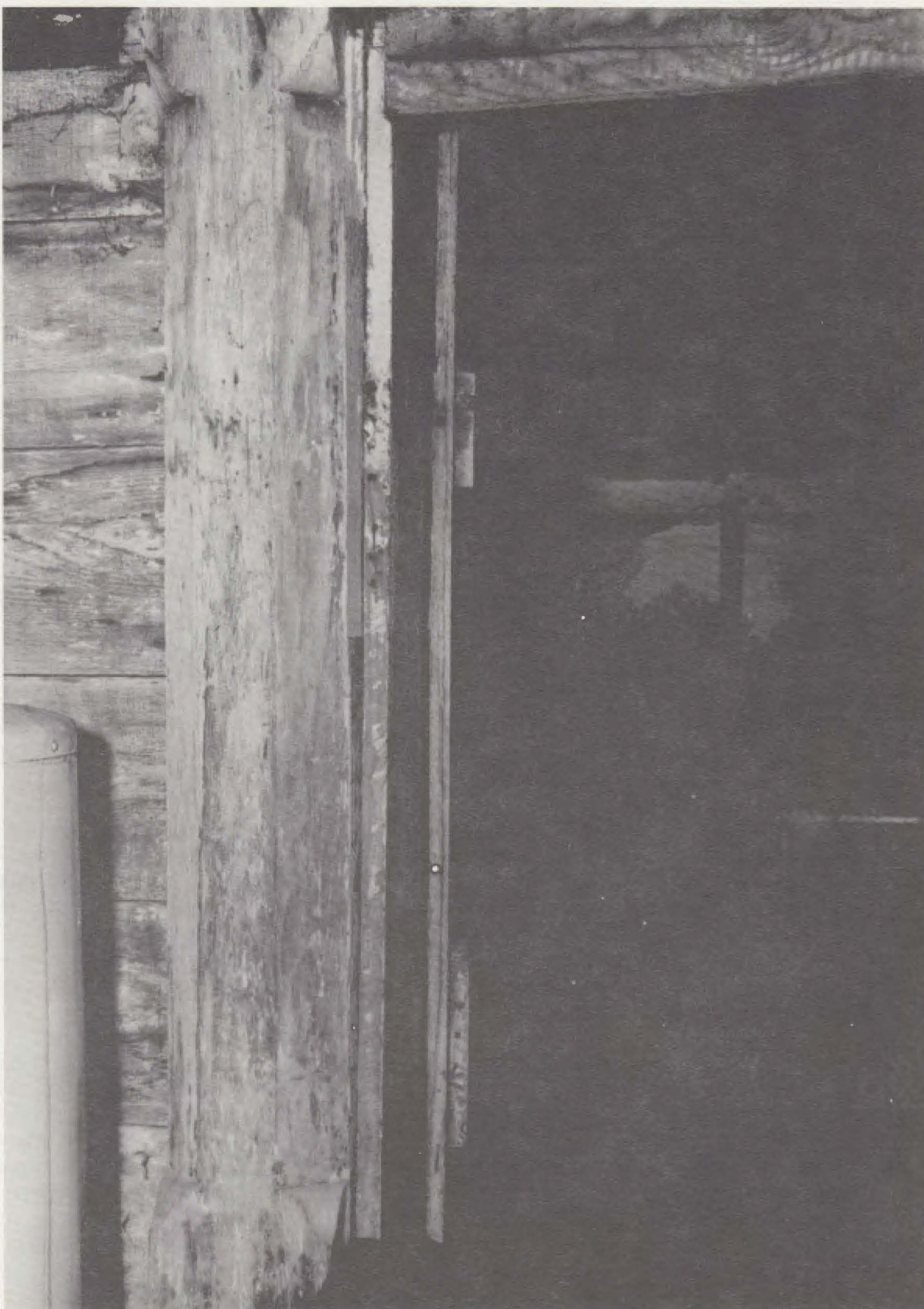


FIGURE 9. The original porch column located on the rear porch of The Pawley House. Notice the chamfered corners and ogee curve to the junction between the chamfer and the corner of the post. Posts such as this were apparently all around the porch originally but none remain on the south and west porches.

planed boards fastened with wrought nails. Overhead in the stairwell is a good example of the type of timber joining that is seen throughout the house (Fig. 10). The lack of weather wear on the back porch wall beside the stairs clearly reveals that this wall was not exposed to the elements.

The Second Floor

The doors are narrow and are artificially grained as are the doors on the first floor. Fragments of HL hinges remain. Recent locks have replaced the original lock plates. Again, these doors do not seem to be in keeping with the character of the whitewashed interior of the building.

The fireplaces probably have had a reinforcing lining of brick added to each side for strength and have no mantel pieces. The ventilation windows on the north side of the room have been sealed because they now open onto the added room above the porch. The sliding doors over the ventilation windows on the south side were added, the original doors probably being hinged, shutter-type doors.

On the east side of the room the original roof line can be seen where the roof was raised in the nineteenth century. The ceiling in the second floor has been added in recent years. The east wall was ceiled with both straight and circular saw-cut ceiling prior to the time the porch and roof were raised, revealing that the room was ceiled after the introduction of the circular saw, long after the house was constructed.

SUMMARY

In summarizing the observations of this house several highlights become evident that are important in evaluating the structure. From the iron hardware, the treatment of the wooden timbers and boards, saw marks, mortar, bricks, etc., it becomes quite clear from the minute one walks into The Pawley House that it is indeed an eighteenth century building. Just how early is yet to be determined, however, from the comparison with known houses of the mid-eighteenth century this writer would suggest that the house dates from that period.

A second observation of note is that in the nineteenth century the north porch was converted to dwelling rooms, at which time the roof was raised in this area of the house. Another point is that the doors appear to have come from another structure, as does the mantel in the west room, perhaps at a similar period of time. If this is so, however, what happened to the original doors? Why was it necessary to bring such doors from elsewhere after the house was completed? Could the doors not have been salvaged from another house on the mainland and brought here when the house was originally built? If this is so, the house must have had graining such as this throughout its interior. This writer does not know when the graining effect such as this was first introduced but does know that it is often seen to be present on houses dating from the first half of the nineteenth century.



FIGURE 10. The timbered arch over the second floor stairwell showing the type of joining seen throughout the house. Notice the straight saw marks on the timbers, a characteristic of eighteenth century saw mills.

The whitewashed interior of The Pawley House is certainly not in keeping with the expert graining effect seen on the doors, but it is in keeping with the kind of treatment one would expect the owner of a beach house to give the interior of his vacation dwelling. The lack of closets, the lack of plastering on the interior, the use of rows of pegs for hanging clothing, the lack of paneling and other details usually associated with permanent dwelling houses, all point to the construction of the building as a summer beach house. It is interesting to note that after two hundred years the building is still serving this function, relatively unchanged through alterations by various owners. There are not many such two hundred year old beach houses still standing on the hurricane whipped beaches of the southeastern United States that are still serving in the original capacity intended by the builder.

Houses such as this with porches around a central four room cottage are seen in Wilmington, Southport, Swansboro, and Brunswick Town in North Carolina and are viewed as a heritage representing eighteenth century West Indies type architecture. The beach houses seen throughout the southeastern coastal area today with porches on one or more sides, sitting on piles, or in some cases having slightly sunken cellars (such as at Brunswick Town), stem from this West Indies architectural tradition. The Pawley House would surely appear to represent a rare surviving example of this tradition.

From the fact that the house is definitely old enough to fall within the eighteenth century period when the property on which it stands was owned by members of the Pawley family, and from the unchallenged acceptance of the house as The Pawley House by tradition, it is entirely proper to use this name in connection with this house.

Because of its fine qualities as an eighteenth century structure and due to its unique survival for two hundred years serving the same function it was built to serve, The Pawley House is a fine example of its type and well deserves our attention and recognition as an historic structure. Our interest is perhaps too often focused on the surviving great mansions of the eighteenth century, representing the refinement and affluence the gentry of the period had achieved. However, beach houses of the period were also an important facet of the wealthy man's life pattern, just as they are today. The mansions built on the mainland have often survived and have continued to be used to the present, but examples of beach houses such as The Pawley House are rare, and because of this, this example should be protected and thoroughly studied and its details recorded. It is hoped that this one day examination will act as a stimulus for further recognition and protection of this unique survival.

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RICHARD POLHEMUS LEAVES STAFF

Mr. Richard Polhemus joined the staff of the Institute in February, 1970 to assist in the laboratory. His background in archeology at the University of Tennessee and the University of Arizona, coupled with intense dedication and unusual capability, soon propelled him to the position of Laboratory Supervisor. He has held that position until the end of February, 1973. In addition to the laboratory position, Dick has assisted on several of the field projects and conducted four field projects of his own. These were: (1) Excavation of the Delft Deposit at Charleston; (2) Excavations at the Fox House; (3) Excavations at Newington Plantation; (4) Excavations at Fort Moore. The latter two projects were organized largely on his own initiative, with minimal funds, using largely volunteer labor, and done mainly on week-ends. Dick has really produced prodigiously for the Institute. He has developed extreme competence in historic sites work and in analysis of historic objects.

With this strong background in experience, Dick is now in need of academic work and has left us, as of February 28th, to return to the University of Tennessee. There he plans to spend two or three years completing his degree requirements. A native of the Knoxville area, Dick will be "at home" at U.T. and should finish up his academic work with relative ease. We are sure that he will also be a great help to Dr. Guthe's research work at U.T.

We all wish Dick the very best of success in attaining his degrees and will miss his cheerful and cooperative assistance here at the Institute.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We would like to call our reader's attention to the newly revised and improved journal of the Archeological Society of South Carolina. This is South Carolina Antiquities and is edited by James L. Michie. There are two issues per year, each containing 25-30 pages including illustrations. It is well printed and attractive looking. The articles are well written and worthwhile. It is one of the values received by membership in the Archeological Society. Membership is only \$5.00 per year for a single member or \$6.00 for a family and can be had by writing, enclosing check, to this editor.